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ABSTRACT

In order to assess preteen activities in a moderate sized community in Georgia, selected group of classroom teachers conducted a pilot study. A questionnaire was developed and distributed to approximately 1,000 fifth-grade children and the results are presented here. It was discovered that Blacks, more than Whites, and boys, more than girls, reported higher levels of positive self-esteem. Self-esteem differences were significant for race but not for gender. Blacks, more than Whites, reported attending school on a regular daily basis and all groups believed that after-school sports were equally, if not more, important than watching television. For all children, there was an adult at home 60% of the time when children returned from school. Likewise, over 60% of the children claimed that they prefer to seek answers to their queries from parents rather than friends, teachers, or school counselors. Some 70% of children reported that a parent or other adult at home had talked to them about sex, with no significant differences for race or gender emerging. Most respondents believed that children should be instructed about sex between the ages of 10 and 13. More than 90% were knowledgeable about AIDS. More Blacks than Whites, and more boys than girls, reported being sexually active. (RJM)

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ED 410 508

A FIFTH GRADE SELF-REPORT STUDY: RACE AND GENDER ISSUES

Description of the Question

A group of teachers, social workers, and members of the medical profession in a moderate size Georgia community, 40 miles west of Atlanta, convened to discuss the substantial rise in teen pregnancies. From this meeting, the local representative of the state Cooperative Extension Service organized The Teen Pregnancy Prevention Council. Regular monthly meetings followed that included teachers, two physicians from the local hospital, representatives from local human service agencies, the director of city recreation services, city and county nurses, and two college professors.

The county health service nurse reported during the first genera meeting that she had been invited by a county school administrator to teach a class at the middle school about human sexuality. After a few sessions, she was asked to discontinue this class because parents complained that the instruction was too explicit. The two sessions that were conducted prior to discontinuance, revealed to the teacher/nurse, that a great deal of false information about sex existed among teen boys and girls. For example, one girl in the first session offered, "I heard that you cannot get pregnant if you do it standing up". And, another child informed the group that, "A girl can't get pregnant if the boy stops at the right time."

The nurse was also surprised to discover that the teen father of a child had a condom in his possession at the time of intercourse, but neither the boy nor the girl were actually certain about how it should be used. It was this experience that encouraged the nurse to include condom instruction in her health class. When parents discovered that this information was included as course content, the school principal was pressured to eliminate the course.

The Teen Pregnancy Prevention Council, decided to conduct a study of preteen and teen activities in the community in order to acquire some essential baseline information. This information was also shared with professionals working in community agencies involved with teens who might be vulnerable.

A selected group of classroom teachers were asked to conduct a pilot study to determine the feasibility of an investigation to assess preteen and teen neighborhood activities, and devise a final instrument that was both valid and reliable. From an initial pilot study, a committee of teachers and college professors developed the final instrument. In selecting, developing and revising the final instrument, various changes were made. While some questions were analyzed for semantics, phrasing, and content, other changes were influenced by the developmental level of the children to be surveyed, and the wording and content that would not jeopardize parental approval. For example, questions were initially devised in a Likert scale format involving five choices from always to never. This format was retained for some

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questions while others were modified to two (yes, no), and three choice possibility (yes, no, don't know). The questions select for this study are in Appendix A.

With approvals from school authorities and parent groups,volunteers distributed questionnaires to elementary schools. The questionnaires were administered to approximately 1000 fifth grade children, by their teachers, in the city and surrounding county school systems. The present study utilized protocols selected from the data base that was established by the Teen Pregnancy Council from the questionnaires that were completed by the fifth graders.

Description of Methods

For this study, the Preteen Prevention Council's survey data base provided 973 usable responses from 463 girls and 510 boys. Also in this sample, 161 subjects were black and 812 were white, including 168 ten year olds; 583 eleven year olds; 187 twelve year olds; and 35 thirteen year old children.

Data were analyzed for each question by the calculation of percentages, and Chi Square (X^2) was utilized to examine statistically significant differences by race and gender. With specific references to each question in Appendix A, the results are displayed in Table I.

Description of Findings

The following information was selected from responses that was reported by the survey results:

1. Blacks more than whites and boys more than girls reported higher levels of positive self esteem. These reported differences were significant for race but not for gender.
2. Blacks more than whites reported attending school on a regular daily basis, and these differences were significant.
3. For all groups, after school sports were equally, or more important, than watching TV. This finding is at variance with current literature which reports TV viewing as more popular than anything else in this age group.
4. For all children, there was an adult at home over 60% of the time (when they arrive from school), and no significant differences were reported by race or gender.
5. Also, over 60% of the time children can expect help from their parents when needed. For race, significant differences were reported but not for gender.
6. Children reported over 60% that they prefer to seek answers to their queries from parents more so than friends, teachers or school counselors. There were no significant differences for race or gender.
7. The group also reported 70% that a parent or other adult at home had talked to them about sex. There were no significant differences for race or gender.
8. The group also reported, with no significant differences, that in their view, children should be instructed about sex between the ages of 10 and 13.
9. All groups reported more than 90% that they were knowledgeable about AIDS.

10. Blacks more than whites and boys more than girls reported participating in sexual activity. These differences were significant.

TABLE I

	Girls	Boys	Blacks	White
Question 1				
A	61%	67%	78%	61%
B	35%	29%	21%	34%
C	4%	4%	1%	4%
	$X^2(2, N = 971) = 4.00, p < .135$		$X^2(2, N = 971) = 17.647, p < .0001$	
Question 2				
A	48%	52%	60%	48%
B	51%	46%	40%	51%
C	1%	2%	0%	1%
	$X^2(2, N = 971) = 6.849, p < .03$		$X^2(2, N = 971) = 10.75, p < .005$	
Question 3				
A	84%	88%	79%	88%
B	1%	2%	2%	1%
C	5%	6%	5%	6%
D	10%	3%	12%	5%
E	0%	1%	1%	0%
	$X^2(4, N = 969) = 30.427, p < .00001$		$X^2(4, N = 969) = 13.58, p < .009$	
Question 4				
A	13%	38%	20%	27%
B	6%	1%	7%	3%
C	26%	21%	24%	23%
D	50%	39%	46%	44%
E	5%	1%	2%	3%
	$X^2(4, N = 969) = 106.525, p < .00001$		$X2(4, N = 969) = 10.38, p < .03$	

Question 5

A	62%	67%	70%	64%
B	11%	10%	9%	10%
C	6%	6%	5%	6%
D	10%	7%	8%	9%
E	11%	10%	9%	11%

$X^2(4, N = 969) = 2.494, p < .65$ $X^2(4, N = 969) = 2.177, p < .71$

Question 6

A	62%	62%	70%	61%
B	25%	23%	15%	25%
C	10%	10%	14%	9%
D	1%	3%	0%	3%
E	1%	2%	1%	2%

$X^2(4, N = 969) = 4.74, p < .31$ $X^2(4, N = 969) = 18.85, p < .0009$

Question 7

A	4%	4%	6%	4%
B	20%	14%	15%	17%
C	42%	39%	31%	42%
D	22%	31%	30%	26%
E	12%	12%	17%	11%

$X^2(4, N = 969) = 14.977, p < .005$ $X^2(4, N = 969) = 11.68, p < .002$

Question 8

A	73%	71%	72%	72%
B	14%	11%	9%	13%
C	6%	8%	11%	7%
D	2%	4%	4%	2%
E	5%	6%	4%	6%

$X^2(4, N = 969) = 6.226, p < .182$ $X^2(4, N = 969) = 7.39, p < .117$

Question 9

A	71%	70%	68%	71%
B	23%	26%	27%	24%
C	6%	4%	5%	5%

$X^2(2, N = 971) = 2.84, p < .24$ $X^2(2, N = 971) = .84, p < .66$

\Question 10

A	12%	15%	17%	13%
B	66%	65%	61%	67%
C	9%	7%	9%	8%
D	5%	5%	5%	5%
E	8%	7%	8%	7%

$X^2(4, N = 969) = 2.21, p < .70$ $X^2(4, N = 969) = 2.17, p < .71$

Question 11

A	95%	95%	94%	95%
B	5%	5%	6%	5%

$X^2(1, N = 972) = .118, p < .73$ $X^2(1, N = 972) = .63, p < .44$

Question 12

A	4%	23%	24%	12%
B	96%	77%	76%	88%

$X^2((1, N = -972) = 82.085, p .0001$ $X^2(1, N = 972) = 13.53, p < .0003$

Description of Presentation

This study will be presented by one of the primary investigators, Harry Morgan, Professor of Early Childhood at the State University of West Georgia, Carrollton, GA. The first preference is for a paper presentation, or interactive format that might be created by the SIG. The third choice is round table.

APPENDIX A

Carroll County 5th Grade School Survey

1. How do you feel about yourself?

   A. Good/I really like myself most of the time
   B. Fair/I sort of like myself most of the time
   C. Terrible/I hate myself most of the time

2. How often do you go to school?
   A. Every school day
   B. Most every day
   C. Sometimes

3. Do you sleep in the same bed with anyone at night?
   A. Alone
   B. With one or both parents
   C. With brother
   D. With sister
   E. With other relative

4. What do you do most days after school?
   A. Sports
   B. Clubs/Church
   C. Watch TV
   D. Play
   E. Nothing

5. Is there a parent or other adult at your house when you get home from school?
   A. Always/5 days a week
   B. Usually/4 days a week
   C. Sometimes/3 days a week
   D. Rarely/1-2 days a week
   E. Never

6. If you have a problem or a need, do your parent(s) help you when you ask?
   A. Always
   B. Usually
   C. Sometimes
   D. Rarely
   E. Never

7. How many people live in your house?
   A. 2
   B. 3
   C. 4
   D. 5
   E. More than 5

8. If you don't know something, who are you likely to ask about it? (Mark only one.)
   A. Parent
   B. Friend
   C. Teacher
   D. School Counselor
   E. Other

9. Has your parent(s), or any other adult, talked with you about sex?
   A. Yes
   B. No
   C. Don't know

10. At what age do you think young people should be told about sex?
    A. 6-9
    B. 10-13
    C. 14-16
    D. 16 or older
    E. Don't know

11. Do you know what AIDS is?
    A. Yes
    B. No

12. Have you ever had sex?
    A. Yes
    B. No